No Objection To Declassification in Full 2011/04/29 : LOC-HAK-189-2-1-9

93D CONGRESS 2d Session } HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES { REPORT No. 93-970

# INQUIRING INTO THE MILITARY ALERT INVOKED ON OCTOBER 24, 1973

APRIL 4, 1974—Referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed

MR. MORGAN, from the Committee on Foreign Affairs, submitted the following

## ADVERSE REPORT

together with

## SUPPLEMENTAL VIEWS

[To accompany H. Res. 1002]

The Committee on Foreign Affairs, to whom was referred the resolution (H. Res. 1002) an inquiry into the military alert invoked on October 24, 1973, having considered the same, report unfavorably thereon without amendment and recommend that the resolution do not pass.

### COMMITTEE ACTION

House Resolution 1002 was introduced on March 25, 1974 and referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs. On March 26, 1974, the Honorable Thomas E. Morgan, Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, sent a letter to the Honorable Kenneth Rush, Acting Secretary of State, requesting prompt executive branch comments on the resolution. The executive branch response was received by the committee on the evening of April 2, 1974.

The Committee on Foreign Affairs met on April 3, 1974, and voted to go into executive session to consider House Resolution 1002 and the executive branch response. After consideration, the resolution was ordered unfavorably reported by a vote of 26 to 2.

### INFORMATION REQUESTED IN HOUSE RESOLUTION 1002

The resolution directs the Secretary of State to furnish the House with the following information:

1. All diplomatic messages from Leonid Brezhnev, Secretary General of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, or from any other Soviet official, to the President on October 24 or 25, 1973 and the President's replies;



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2. A list of actions, communications, and certain readiness measures taken by the Soviet Union which led to the October 24, 1973 military alert;

3. A list of the precautionary measures taken by the United States, including the Defense Condition Number 3 alert (DEFCON 3);

4. A list of all meetings attended by the Secretary of State on October 24 and 25, 1973 at which the Middle East conflict was discussed; times of the meetings, persons attending, and decisions reached; and,

5. The date and time of the decision to order DEFCON 3 and the name of the person or persons making the decision.

## Executive Branch Response

The executive branch has furnished the committee with access to the information requested in the resolution. Part of that information was conveyed to the committee in a letter from the Secretary of State and an unclassified summary of the events relating to the United States military alert of October 24, 1973. These documents follow:

April 2, 1974.

Hon. Thomas E. Morgan,
*Chairman,*
*Committee on Foreign Affairs.*

Dear Mr. Chairman: In reply to your letter of March 26 requesting comments on the March 25 resolution of inquiry, we are prepared to meet with you, Ranking Minority Member Frelinghuysen, and Congressmen Hamilton and Buchanan to present the exchange of messages between Secretary General Brezhnev and President Nixon referred to in H. Res. 1002. In addition, recognizing the sincere concern of your Committee, I am enclosing pertinent material in response to requests for lists of actions, precautionary measures and meetings concerned with the Middle East conflict which are referred to in H. Res. 1002.

Best regards,

Henry Kissinger.

### UNCLASSIFIED SUMMARY

1. As events in the Middle East developed on October 24, we noted a series of Soviet actions which were of concern. Several key Soviet military units went into alert status. Soviet naval units moved into position in the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea. The President then received General Secretary Brezhnev's letter which was unusually tough.

2. It was essential to clear up any doubt about U.S. determination in this situation and prepare to cope with the quickly-unfolding events. A world-wide alert was ordered and we initiated intensive consultations within NATO. Ambassador Rumsfeld met with the North Atlantic Council at 7:00 a.m. on October 25. We subsequently kept NATO informed on a continuing basis.



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3. Beginning in the morning of October 24, the Secretary of State was in a series of virtually uninterrupted meetings dealing with Middle East developments, negotiations in the UN, and Soviet actions in both arenas. In the morning of October 24, a meeting of the Washington Special Action Group on the crisis was called. This group and working groups under its direction continued to meet during the next 48 hours. On October 25, a second full meeting of the Washington Special Action Group was held.

4. The President made the final decision to increase the alert status of U.S. forces. The alert was set at 11:41 p.m. on October 24, 1973. On that date, as at all times during the Middle East conflict, the President was kept closely advised of political and military events in the area, of initiatives being taken at the United Nations, and of the actions being taken by the Soviet Union. During frequent meetings—on an average of more than twice daily—and in frequent contacts with Secretary Kissinger, he provided guidance on the course of U.S. actions in seeking to resolve the conflict. At a meeting of NSC members chaired by Dr. Kissinger, and, pursuant to the direction of the President, the defense alert was implemented. Secretary Schlesinger instructed Admiral Moorer to that effect, and it was ordered at 11:41 p.m. The President was in command during the course of the evening and he finally approved the entire package of preventive measures at about 3:00 a.m. on the morning of October 25.

5. As the Secretary has publicly explained, he does not believe that further recitation beyond that which he gave to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the Senate Armed Services Committee, and the House Foreign Affairs Committee would contribute toward the goal of peace which we all seek. Despite the considerable progress made in the Middle East since November, the situation there remains delicate. In our view, resurrecting the October episode now might well impair the progress achieved thus far. Consequnetly, we remain strongly of the opinion that it is not in the interest of the United States to review publicly all of the events which led to the increased readiness status. At the same time, however, there is also no change in our position that the full facts and full considerations leading to the President's decision should be made public at the appropriate time. Further material has been provided to the HFAC on a classified basis.

In addition to the unclassified material, the committee also had access to classified information relating to the questions raised in the resolution and considered all such information thoroughly.

## Committee Comment

The task of the committee with respect to House Resolution 1002 was not to decide whether or not the military alert constituted an appropriate response to the events which developed on October 24



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and 25, 1973. The committee has addressed that issue in earlier meetings with the Secretary of State and other executive branch officials and expects to pursue it further in the future.

House Resolution 1002 requests factual information on the events of October 24 and 25, 1973, with respect to the military alert. The Committee believes that the executive branch has been forthcoming and responsive to the requests contained in the resolution. Much of the information is sensitive, however, and the committee agrees with the executive branch that public release of such information at this time would be adverse to the national interest of the United States.



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## SUPPLEMENTAL VIEWS OF HON. H. R. GROSS

I voted to table the resolution offered by the gentleman from Massachusetts, Mr. Harrington, because I believe it is not in the best interests of this country to disclose all the information it mandated the executive branch to make available, and because an agreement was reached whereby the Subcommittee on the Near East and South Asia will conduct further hearings on this matter.

However, the Office of the President and the Department of State must be put on notice that henceforth the Members of Congress are entitled to know the contents of communications that are exchanged between the United States and any foreign country or countries—communications which lead to placing on the alert substantial elements of the Armed Forces of the United States.

Never again should members of Congress permit themselves, for lack of reliable information, to be sucked into a war as they were in Southeast Asia.

Additionally, Members of Congress are entitled to know why information concerning the alert of last October, which was denied to them, was leaked to a Washington newspaper.

H. R. GROSS.



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